# THE CHERUB By C. E. Scoggins

### The Strong Man of the Rio Verde Meets His Conqueror--- A Story of Picturesque Contrasts

In a far niche of the hills a little tree of smoke sprouted and grew. "It comes." marveled El Caiman. "Of a truth it comes."

He could understand how Vasquez the shoemaker had known that the train would pass this very spot, for here ran the iron rails that marked its trail through the hills; but how had Vasquez known that it would come in this very hour of the afternoon? So huge and powerful a thing—why should it stop merely because they had torn up a few of inose little rails? Would, it not see the rails beyond the gap and rush on, leaving them foolish and help-less in the bushes?

It came, this train! It grew; it was bigger, fiercer than he had thought. The train topped the pass. Then with a wild shriek and a thunderous banging of its members it stopped!

El Calman rose with an exultant roar. "Now, little ones, now!".

He moved forward to carry out the planned robbery, and he did not see how prudently Vasquez and his fellows kept their shelter in the bushes. He saw, indeed, the windows of one car bristling with gun barrels; but he saw, too, the frightened faces of people waiting to he robbed.

The next minute he saw something else. The train was moving again—

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Through the mad snorting of the monster came a sound as of the clapping of many hands. Something smote him in the arm, in the side of his brawny neck, and all sound, all struggle, all things ceased.

mouth.
"Drink, devil! There is no more water this side of the Rio Verde."
At risk of drowning the devil he persevered. Groaning, he struggled up. It was very heavy for so small a devil, very awkward to handle with one arm. He knew it made itself heavy to test his strength.
"Thou thinkest that I cannot." he muttered through set teeth. "but I

muttered through set teeth, "but I can. What I will I can. I am El Caiman. Hast heard of me, devil? I am the strong one."

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HE came to the swift ford, cursing the chill current that dragged at his legs, the rock that shifted treacherously under his feet, the small devil who knew he had only one good arm. He bent his will to the task of mounting the sheer, twisting trail, met the thin, icy air that seeped down from the high mesa, so that, though he was all after within, he felt his muscles jerking with the impact of the cold.

It was unfair. It was an inhuman test. Laboriously he evolved a cunning thought; the devil was only small devil who knew he had only

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Through the man should stortling of the throughing the man and all sould all properties of many hands. Something same him in the arm, in the side of his brawny neck, and all sound, all properties of the strong one, and what I will I cam."

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He offered a thick forefinger to the He offered a thick forefinger to the young acrobat, who without hesitation transferred his grip to it and shricked with glee as El Caiman swung him about and about. The woman caught her breath, for the rocks were sharp; but with a non-chalant flourish El Caiman returned the child safely to his shoulder.

"Ay," breathed the admiring female, "he is indeed strong, indeed the son of El Caiman. How is he called, the bebe?"

El Caiman did not waver between his personal pride and the greater pride of the incomparable man-child. "He is not the son of any pelado," he

hands that were so strangely white, and sobbed and sobbed, "Caiman!"

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The letters of the police travel by

humbly, "have your graces the great goodness to direct me to the street of placers?"

The house of the American stood on a corner. Along the dark side

## Mrs. Brown, in London, Outshines All Previous American Hostesses

The state of the control of the cont